

Preliminary Amdt. dated October 14, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method, in a messaging server, of connecting
2 parties with mutual interests, comprising the steps of:
3 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ a media object to be displayed to a first user;
4 ~~receiving~~ ~~accepting~~ a first comment from the first user;
5 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the media object to be displayed to a second user along with
6 the first comment;
7 ~~receiving~~ ~~accepting~~ a reply comment from the second user wherein the first user
8 and the second user are not connected in an instant messaging session; and
9 if the reply comment fits a matching criteria, connecting the first and the second
10 user in ~~[[a]]~~ an instant messaging session.

1 2. (Original) The method of claim1, wherein the matching criteria is in the
2 form of an approval indication by the first user of the reply comment.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim1, wherein the media object includes one,
2 or a combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1 4. (Original) The method of claim1, further comprising the steps of:
2 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the media object and the first comment for display to to a
3 third user and subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;
4 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the first user with reply comments received ~~accepted~~ from
5 the third or subsequent users; and
6 if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are accepted by
7 the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments to the instant
8 messaging session.

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1 5. (Canceled)

1 6. (Canceled)

1 7. (Original) The method of claim4, wherein the predetermined display
2 count is a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1 8. (Original) The method of claim1, wherein a plurality of media objects are
2 associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are associated with
3 the nodes.

1 9. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:
2 accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment with one
3 of the nodes; and
4 presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of the
5 nodes.

1 10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising a step of limiting
2 the subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent node.

1 11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of media objects are
2 associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1 12. (Currently Amended) A method, in a messaging server, of connecting
2 parties with mutual interests, comprising the steps of:
3 providing ~~presenting~~ a media object for display to a plurality of users;
4 receiving ~~accepting~~ a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;
5 providing ~~presenting~~ the media object and the first comment for display to the
6 plurality of users;
7 receiving ~~accepting~~ a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users;

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8 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the reply comment to the first user wherein the first user and
9 the second user are not in an instant messaging session; and
10 connecting the first and the second user in [[a]] an instant messaging session if the
11 first user indicates approval of the reply comment.

1 13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes
2 one, or a combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1 14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising the
2 steps of:
3 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the media object and the first comment to a third user and
4 subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;
5 ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the first user with reply comments received ~~accepted~~ from
6 the third or subsequent users; and
7 if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are accepted by
8 the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments to the instant
9 messaging session.

1 15. (Canceled)

1 16. (Canceled)

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display
2 count is a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1 18. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects
2 are associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are associated
3 with the nodes.

1 19. (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:
2 accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment with one
3 of the nodes; and

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4 presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of the
5 nodes.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising a step of limiting
2 the subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent node.

1 21. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects
2 are associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1 22. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes a
2 link to the first comment.

1 23. (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of the
2 second user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more
3 comments including the first comment.

1 24. (Currently Amended) A method, in a messaging server, of connecting
2 parties with mutual interests, comprising the steps of:

3 ~~providing presenting~~ a media object for display to a plurality of users;
4 ~~receiving accepting~~ a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;
5 ~~providing presenting~~ the media object and a link to the first comment for display
6 to the plurality of users;

7 ~~receiving accepting~~ a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users in
8 response to the first comment;

9 ~~providing presenting~~ the reply comment to the first user wherein the first user and
10 the second user are not in an instant messaging session; and

11 connecting the first and the second user in [[a]] an instant messaging session if the
12 first user indicates approval of the reply comment.

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1 25. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of the
2 second user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more
3 comments including the first comment.

1 26. (Canceled)

1 27. (Original) The method of claim 24, further including the step of providing
2 the first comment to the second user in response to a search inquiry entered by the second user.

1 28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the search inquiry is a
2 keyword search.